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The Forestry Problem for Vermont.

BY M. J. HAPGOOD.

IN proportion to its area, no other state in the union is more strongly concerned in the question of forest preservation than the State of Vermont.

Possessing extensive natural forests and a soil which, invariably fairly exults in timber growth, even after it has been exhausted of its agricultural resources; permeated with trout streams of extensive power, but dependent upon forest covert for their enduring supply; abundantly stocked with game which need only the protection of this wild covert for its continued production and increase; covered, over its whole extent, with hills and mountains which are an ever increasing attraction to the multitudes of its near-by city denizens, so long as they are kept dressed in the covering nature ordained,—Vermont, the acknowledged Switzerland of America, yields to none of her sister states in her interest in the protection and preservation of what is her crowning glory.

That her many mountain sides should ever be stripped bare, and burned down to bed rock, through heedless neglect or careless oversight, would be, not only a local, but also a national shame and loss.

EXTENT OF AREA.

From the Massachusetts to the Canadian boundary there is a stretch of mountains nearly without a break, and covered with forest to quite its whole extent. One can journey northerly from the Massachusetts border for at least a hundred miles and not come in contact with a cleared space. In the two southern counties alone one can traverse at least a hundred thousand acres and not cross an open field, the only break being the necessary opening for four highways, with these, even, to a large extent so overarched as to afford uninterrupted shade.

RAPIDITY OF GROWTH.

It is surprising how soon nature will assert herself in the matter of reproduction, when left undisturbed. Land which our fathers plowed over fifty years ago, but deserted through what was then called shiftlessness, is in many places our most valuable asset to-day. And the thrifty farmer who then kept his back pastures cleared, oftentimes slashing down acres of young spruce, destroyed a legacy to his children which would now have made them independent. Fairly matured second growth produces, as a rule, by far more feet of merchantable timber to the acre than the soil bore in its original state.

The "bull spruce," the quick growing balsam, the popple, and white birch, not many years ago considered a nuisance, are now of great and increasing value. And there is no soil in the state but what will readily produce a crop of some kind, requiring, as a rule, only to be let alone. Seed planting, sprout planting, cultivation, although they can do much to hasten, are unnecessary. Each specie knows and seeks its place. If the tract is swampy, the hemlock and balsam are soon there. The dryer soil is soon occupied by the hardy spruce and hardwoods. And it is astonishing how soon a single pine upon the top of some sandy, barren knoll, will soon beget a multitude of progeny.

There is, in the state, intervale land, easily worked, sufficient for our wants. The rest man should keep his hands off from until Nature bids him partake of the matured increase. The larger portion of the land in Vermont is unprofitable for tillage. Why not allow it to "grow up,"—"A thing of beauty and a joy forever?"

HOW SHALL WE PROTECT THEM

Is the burning question of the day. It is

useless to talk to the average near-sighted land owner how he should look ahead and not give away his Christmas trees at a penny a piece which would, if left alone, bring his children dollars instead of cents. With him the piece of copper, close by glitters stronger than the piece of gold at a distance. He never has listened, and never will listen, to the voice of posterity. If he has a piece of timber, he sells the stumpage to the portable mill owner who soon strips it bare and naked.

Under private ownership, it is only to large and combined interests whose territory is large enough to give growth for a supply, that we can look for any measure of true discretion in this matter. But it is unnatural for them to care for watershed, game, or scenic affairs, or to provide for fire protection.

THE STATE SHOULD CONTROL absolutely, these forest stretches. There should be no risk run that some day they will be devastated for pulp or charcoal purposes. They should be absolutely reserved as public property, for combined water-shed, game, scenic and lumber uses. Thus, and thus only, can the true combination be formed, only under state, or government ownership can we have true guardianship.

We want here in Vermont no Corbin parks, or lordly English estates. The air, the water, the scenery, the magnificent coverts, of these grand old mountains, should never be allowed to be wired up; but every son and every daughter of Vermont, should feel that they, and any of their guests, are upon *home soil* when within their bounds.

That they will be wired up unless some preventive action is soon taken, is as cer-

tain as that the sun will rise in the morning. Already the process has begun, and upon the tracts in general we have no reason to think that we can much longer escape such a calamity as burned down to bed rock thirty-five thousand acres in the White Mountains, leaving a hideous reminder of private greed for future generations.

The state can appropriate today, at a price only nominal with what it would be



"ROARING BRANCH,"

A full fed stream in a virgin forest of the Green Mountains.

in the near future, and, looked at merely as a business investment, it could soon yield returns that would, at the least, repay interest and cost of protection. But let us turn entirely from the purely mercenary view, and consider the matter chiefly from the standpoint of love and protection for what is the crowning attraction of the state, deprived of which Vermont can be no true home for us.

The Rustling of the Corn.

LOIS H. FIELD.

When the haze of Indian Summer
Dimly veils the dusky pines,
When the noisy crows go southward
And the wild geese fly in lines,
Then my mind goes back in fancy
To the home where I was born,
And I hear again in dreams
The gentle rustling of the corn.

When the golden-rod is blooming,
And the summer fades away
And the winter time is coming
And the skies are growing gray;
When the leaves come gently drifting down
From every tree and thorn,
Then, to me, there is no music
Like the rustling of the corn.
When the days are growing shorter
And Thanksgiving time draws near,
When the milk-weed throws its silk away
And the grass is brown and sere—
Mother's standing in the doorway
Blowing on the dinner horn
And I hear the gentle, whispering,
Rustling music of the corn.